

Meeting with Mitch O'Farrell
Councilman for District 13, Los Angeles
January 23, 2020
Parkview Senior Living, 1902 Park Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90026

Introduction of Councilman O'Farrell and other City representative. Rick will moderate and introduce Dr. Jeanette Storms and Joe Fairbrother, who will briefly tell their story. Councilman will then be asked to address following concerns regarding the tent encampments in Echo Park and its residual effects on residents, immediate community and city of Los Angeles:

- 1. Why is the posted law not enforced?** The sign says "Park closed from 10:30 pm to 5 am." Another states "No tents, stakes, camping, open flames or cooking." Many other violations could be cited as per the posted signs. (Photos of these legal statutes and other regulations issued by the Department of Recreation and Parks are attached here). **The lack of enforcement of this is at the root of all the other problems we have experienced.** Juan, the Field Representative, told, " It has been collectively decided to allow tents in front of your building... since it affects the least amount of people." Officer Vargas offered the homeless a place to go and services last week but they refused. **Why are they permitted to stay? Why total disregard for the law and rights of other citizens? Why is lawlessness permitted?**
- 2. Why is Echo Park the only park where an encampment is permitted?** Permitting 10-30 tents at a time is not a way of solving the problem of homelessness and it is directly impacts the community at large in Echo Park. Can you move the homeless in this encampment to a more suitable place? Please find attached a copy of the names of other parks that were visited and saw no encampments. We feel that our rights as taxpayers have been violated as we are the only park that has been impacted by this.

3. Furthermore, this has a direct impact on property values and quality of life in not only our community the entire Echo Park area. Specifically, when Parkview was built it quickly filled up and in a few months we had a waiting list. Now we have 9 units vacant, are losing \$15,000 a month and last year had a loss of \$200,000. Because of this impact, there is the real possibility that this building may need to be sold. This would mean the dislocation and very real possibility of tenants facing homelessness. This also means that some of our most vulnerable residents would be homeless as well the residents who are on Section 8, Veterans Assistance, and Foursquare Ministers. Many of our residents fear becoming homeless. **Can you address this financial impact and assure the residents this will not happen?**

4. The presence of this encampment has created many residual problems including quality of life, safety, health, and security issues. I am sure these same issues are experienced by the larger community. These include
- a. **Health.** There is a high-risk due to human waste and illegal drug waste, which is a haven for an epidemic of Cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A & E, typhus, and even leprosy. **Why are not the encampments shut down due to these risks alone?** As to drug use, residents have looked out of their windows and seen heroin kitchens and have seen people shooting up. Please see enclosed photos. Please, consider shutting down the encampment due to this.
 - b. **Safety and security issues:** While we have taken every precaution to create a safe and secure environment, there are constant violations. Here are problems we have encountered and have photos and or witnesses to verify

these incidents. (a) People violating our perimeter to use the pool or outside shower for bathing. It is shocking for our older female residents to see nude men in the pool. Also this has made the pool unsafe for our residents to swim in due to the possibility of STD. (b) one of our residents was mugged in the park and his cell phone stolen (c) one of our older residents lives in fear because of seeing intruders in the pool. These issues have grown greatly during this last year. We didn't have these problems before the encampment came.

- c. **Quality of life.** Many of the residents moved here specifically to be near family and grandchildren. They have had many wonderful times with family in the park in the past, but currently are afraid to take their grandchildren to the park due to the encampment. Others do so and take the risk but this has created a lot of fear. Our parks and especially this park were built to provide a safe place for families of the city to come to. This is in jeopardy due to the encampment.

- 5. **Why does the city clean out the park and remove all homeless residents and tents for filming companies and not because of requests from citizens who have legitimate health and safety reasons due to the homeless?** It appears money talks but the real issues and daily concerns of caring and interested residents of Echo Park do not matter.

- 6. **Why is there no response to my LA311 app?** Several reports were made with no response. Anthony report several times to have graffiti removal. No response. What can be done to make this more responsive?

7. **What action can we expect you and the city council to take to relocate the members of this encampment quickly and return our park to the wonderful condition it was in after its renovation?** We remember that \$67.4 million was spent on transforming the lake/park and it was in pristine and wonderful condition. It was even called the “Pearl of Los Angeles.” (During your campaign you stated when asked that there will be LAPD presence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.) It has been the backdrop of many television, films and commercials and is a real drawing card for tourists. Now the encampment is keeping families and tourists away. We are concerned senior residents who care deeply about our community. Please, take these points under consideration and act quickly to clear the park of the encampment so the quality of life and safety can return.